

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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R 271448Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9838

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 5387

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: OPTIMISTIC COMMENTS ON FRANCO'S HEALTH

1. IN RECENT DAYS MEDICAL ADVISORS AND CLOSE ASSOCIATES OF FRANCO HAVE CONTINUED TO MAKE HIGHLY OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENTS OF STATE OF CAUDILLO'S HEALTH.

2. IN INTERVIEW APPEARING IN PRESS AUG 26, VACATIONING PRIME MINISTER ARIAS NAVARRO STATED REPORTS HE IS RECEIVING ON FRANCO'S HEALTH ARE "INCREASING FELICITOUS." HE ADDED THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT SAME MORNING THAT FRANCO'S RECOVERY IS "PRACTICALLY TOTAL", THAT HE PLAYS GOLF, HAS FULL USE OF HIS FACULTIES AFTER HAVING OVERCOME CERTAIN PROBLEMS OF SPEECH.

3. IN INTERVIEW WITH VALENCIA DAILY LEVANTE, DR. ARMANDO MUNOZ CALERO, MEMBER OF FRANCO'S MEDICAL TEAM, STATED THAT IN HIS JUDGEMENT FRANCO IS IN FULL MENTAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITION TO RESUME FUNCTIONS OF CHIEF OF STATE. HE REMAINS IN POSSESSION OF TOTAL AND ABSOLUTE CAPACITY
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OF MENTAL REACTION AND HIS MIND IS TOTALLY AND ABSOLUTELY

CLEAR. DR. MUNOZ COMMENTED THAT NO COMPLICATIONS WERE FORESEEN IN HIS CIRCULATORY ILLNESS, ADDING OF COURSE THAT FRANCO IS EXPOSED LIKE ANY OTHER PERSON TO ANY ILLNESS. ASKED WHAT TYPE OF LIFE FRANCO WOULD HAVE TO LEAD FROM NOW ON, DR. MUNOZ REPLIED THAT HE SHOULD LEAD AN ACTIVE LIFE WITHOUT LETTING HIMSELF BECOME FATIGUED. THROUGH TOO MUCH EFFORT.

4. PREVIOUS WEEK FRANCO'S SON-IN-LAW, HEART SPECIALIST DR. CRISTOBAL MARTINEZ-BORDIU TOLD REPORTER OF IDEAL GALLEGOS THAT FRANCO "IN IN BETTER CONDITION THAN ANY NORMAL MAN OF HIS AGE." MARTINEZ-BORDIU, AFTER MENTIONING THAT FRANCO IS NOW RECEIVING SPEECH THERAPY, STATED THAT THE CAUDILLO WOULD RESUME PLAYING GOLF.

5. FOLLOWING DAY, FRANCO'S SISTER, DONA PILAR, COMMENTED ON FRANCO'S IMPROVING CONDITION TO IDEAL GALLEGOS, NOTING THAT GENERALISIMO'S WEIGHT HAD INCREASED BY ONE KILO SINCE HE ARRIVED AT PAZO DE MEIRAS VACATION RETREAT IN NORTHERN SPAIN.

6.COMMENT: THESE REASSURANCES BY INNER CIRCLE ON FRANCO'S CONDITION SEEM SUSPICIOUSLY FREQUENT AND OPTIMISTIC IN TONE. THEY ARE PROBABLY MOTIVATED AS MUCH BY POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS AS BY MEDICAL ONES. COMMENTS OF MARTINEZ-BORDIU AND ARIAS PROVIDE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT FRANCO'S DETERIORATION ACCOMPANIED BY SPEECH IMPAIRMENT SERIOUS ENOUGH TO WARRANT SPEECH THERAPY.
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